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## Welcome to Polaroid Transfer

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Welcome to this exciting new way of making images. To get the most out of this process, you must be flexible and open-minded. You are entering a creative arena where each variable changes the final result in a much more free floating manner than traditional imagemaking. Every imagemaker has their own “favorite” methods to create transfers. We will get you started on with some recommendations, but each you will find your own style and technique for making the Polaroid transfer. That is part of the fun and magic of Polaroid Transfers! Enjoy.

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## Schedule

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12-12:30 pm	The Polaroid Transfer: Creativity meets Serendipity
12:30-1:30	The Procedures: Polaroid Image Transfer and Polaroid Emulsion Transfers
1:30-3:30	Make Polaroids
3:30-4:00	Share Results, Questions, Closing
4:00-4:30	Help clean up

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## Creating the transfer

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Your first decision in the Polaroid Transfer process is how to get your image onto the film. The following is a summary of the variety of pathways to create a Polaroid Transfer:

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## Working Live

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If you want to make “live” polaroid transfers, you can use a 4x5 camera Polaroid Film Holder or a handheld Polaroid camera. This will allow you to make 4 x 5” or 3 1/4” x 4 1/4” images depending on the camera. The advantage of this is the freedom of composition and the spontaneity. If you want to really work out in the field (where it would be difficult or impossible to transfer the image), it is possible with the 4x5 back to shoot the image and not process immediately. When you return to your work space, you will then process and transfer.

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## Printing From Slides

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35mm Slides can be printed on polaroid material using the Vivitar Instant Slide Printer, the Daylab II. The Vivitar allows 3 1/4” x 4 1/4” images with no enlarging. Filtration if desired, is done with acetate filters. The Daylab II allows limited enlargement, has built-in filtration and will do 3 1/4” x 4 1/4” , 4 x 5” and 8 x 10” images. (8 x 10” images are very expensive and require a separate processor in addition to the Daylab base.)

Printing from Slides allows you to work in the field with your traditional 35mm camera, try many shots and only use the best for your transfer. It is less spontaneous than working live, but it is also more controlled. It allows you to try the same image again and again, until it works the way your want it to work. (Or, more likely, you like the way it ended up working.)

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## **Projection Printing**

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Using an enlarger is also a possibility. It allows test strips, burning and dodging, and more extensive filtration control. Projection Printing also allows more extensive cropping than any other method. All the sizes of Polaroid are possible with projection printing. Use a white board in the film holder to focus and set up the enlarger.

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## **Conclusion**

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Whichever method you choose to get the image on the Polaroid film, approach the process both scientifically and artistically. Scientifically, get your variables to a minimum. Stick to one procedure and learn it. Keep notes and be meticulous in your steps. Artistically, enjoy the process and embrace the serendipity!

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## **The Procedure**

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Read 5 articles on Polaroid Transfer, and you will get 5 opinions on how to do it including different times, temperatures and ideas! Today, the following will be our starting points. From there, you can experiment!

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## **For the Vivitar**

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1. Begin with your slide. Eventually, you might want to use filtration to accentuate some colors or to correct for the red/yellow loss in the transfer process, but for now, let's keep it simple. Start with an exposure marking one or two lines over recommended. Turn on the Slide Printer. Place the slide on the light square, move it back and forth according to how you want to crop (cropping is unavoidable—the proportions of the Polaroid are different than 35mm.) Place the slide in the machine.
2. Now soak your paper in warm distilled water for two minutes. (approximately 100 degrees F.) Tap water can be the wrong pH, so distilled water is safer and more consistent. Take the water from the coffee urn. When it cools too much, return it to the tub and take more hot water.
3. Remove the paper from the warm water. You can squeegee or mop it with paper toweling on the plexiglass. Dryer paper will lead to sharper images. Moister paper will give more painterly effects.
4. Expose the slide onto the Polaroid Film. Pull the first paper tab. Pull the second paper tab. Wait 10-30 seconds. Peel open the film packet. Place the negative down on the receptor paper quickly to avoid drying out the dyes but carefully so it doesn't move around. If you place it and then move it a touch, the image will blur and/or squash. Roll in one direction 5-9 times.
5. Now the transfer must be kept warm and moist for 2 minutes. You can use a blow dryer or a hot plate. With the hot plate, place the transfer on top of a moist towel with a matte board on top. A light weight can be useful also. With the blow dryer, blow dry on "hot" to the top of the polaroid.
6. After 2 minutes carefully and slowly peel away the negative. Have an exacto knife handy to cut away areas that are sticking. "Lift-off" is when some of the emulsion is left on the negative rather than transferring to your new base. This can be creative but is usually

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only a cyan mess. If the transfer is not warm enough, not wet enough, this will happen. Sometimes the dark areas will simply not transfer. Pay special attention to your rolling techniques when working with an image that has large dark areas.

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### **For 4 x 5**

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The procedure of transferring will be almost identical, except you will want to cut off the chemical trap to get rid of the excess chemicals. Watch the procedure for using the 4x5 holder and process carefully.

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### **For the Daylab Jr.**

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Follow the above procedure for transfers. The Daylab Jr. has some different buttons and switches, but the basics are the same. The big advantage of the Daylab is both that it offers the opportunity to use different filtration and it is currently available for purchase. You also have the opportunity to more directly judge your cropping through the view window and affect your exposure by the exposure dial. This machine is easy to use and with a little practice you will get the hang of it.

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### **Some Additional Notes**

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#### **Paper**

The weight and type of paper will make a big difference in this process. The images will look different on different papers and the procedure for soaking will be different. Many papers can be used and fabrics are also possible. Polaroid recommends starting with a 100% rag hot press watercolor paper. For soaking, 80 lb. will take about a minute, 140 lb. two minutes. You can also experiment with dry paper for sharper images, or less time. Some sources suggest as little as 30 seconds of soaking as a middle ground between wet and dry transfers.

#### **Timing**

Timing can make a big difference in the look of your transfers. Attempt to be consistent and accurate in the beginning, but when you are ready, begin to play with different times on the paper soak, the opening of the film packet and the peeling of the negative from the receptor paper.

#### **Enhancement**

Images can be enhanced with paints and pencils. Sandpaper can scratch the surface. Colored elements can add to your message. Use your imagination!

Images can also be brightened by soaking in a bath of vinegar for a short time then washed. Be careful with the edges and if the acidity is too strong, the image will blister.

#### **Permanence and Reproduction**

This is not a permanent process. If you want to make your transfer last as long as possible, hang in indirect light and spray with a UV inhibitor. For greater permanence, you should copy your image onto slide film or negative film and make traditional photographic prints. This also allows multiples. Computer scanning and manipulation is also a way to extend the life of your Polaroid Transfer Image. For multiples, color copiers offer fast, fun, inexpensive (relatively) reproduction.

## **Black and White Transfers**

This is most easily possible by making black and white slides and printing them onto the color Polaroid materials. Use either the Polaroid Black and White Slide Film or T-Max film with a T-max slide kit. Black and White Emulsion Transfers are possible with PolaPan Pro 100 type 54, but it is a more complicated process.

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## **Definitions**

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### **Negative**

The part of the polaroid sandwich you would usually throw away. This part, after the 10-15 second development, the dyes (emulsion) are waiting here to migrate to the final image surface.

### **Positive**

The part of the Polaroid sandwich which would usually be your final product. IT is now a small 3x4 piece of plastic that you will throw away. (Although occasionally the faded image on the positive is quite lovely)

### **Receptor Surface or Receptor Paper**

This is where you transfer the dyes. Most commonly a 100% cotton 140 lb. hot press watercolor paper, the receptor surface can also be many other types of papers or fabric. The type of receptor surface will determine your soak time and can affect you wait time. Each surface, smooth or textured, white or cream, will affect the final look of your transfer. Silk, cotton, printmaking papers, rice paper, paper bags and many other surfaces can all make interesting receptor surfaces.

### **Lift-off**

This is when a portion of the dyes do not transfer. The emulsion sticks to the negative and peels off. Pressure, moisture, heat, density of area, paper surface all can cause lift off.

### **Polaroid Image Transfer**

When a Polaroid Film (usually 669 or 59) is exposed either live or from slide then partially processed. The film packet is opened early and the dyes which would usually migrate to the positive print of the film packet, instead are attached to a paper or fabric surface.

### **Polaroid Emulsion Transfer**

In this process the image is allowed to process normally. It dries for 8-24 hours. The back of the print is strengthened with paint or contact paper and the emulsion is floated off in a hot water bath. It can then be stretched, wrinkled and bent to the shape you wish and then attached to your receptor surface.

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## References

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- Polaroid Transfers: A complete Visual Guide to Creating Image and Emulsion Transfers, Kathleen Thormod Carr, Amphot, 1997.
- Polaroid Transfer, Bobbi Lane, Photographic, August 1996, Page 61&62.
- Using the Daylab II for Image Transfer, Paul Brenner, Photo Techniques, Nov/Dec 1996, page 43-47.
- A Step by Step Guide, Polaroid Corporation, 1995.
- Test Magazine, Polaroid Corporation, Spring/Summer 1996.
- Polaroid Guide to Instant Imaging: Advance Image Transferring, Polaroid Corporation, 1991.
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## Polaroid Emulsion Transfer station.

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- 1. Make a 669 picture with the daylab or live. Let dry for 24 hours or force dry with blow dryer.**
  - 2. Back pictures with contact paper. (optional)**
  - 3. Use HOT water 140-160 degrees F. (Use tongs) (4 minutes face up)**
  - 4. Place acetate in bottom of cold water tray to pick up emulsion.**
  - 5. Rub carefully in the cold water to remove the emulsion.**
  - 6. Flip emulsion if you want right orientation.**
  - 7. Place on moisten paper or other surface and roll from center.**
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## Polaroid Image Transfer Station.

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- 1. Place slide carefully. Check settings for exposure and color balance.**
- 2. Have your paper ready! (1 or 2 minutes in warm water; squeegee onto plexiglass.)**
- 3. Pull white tab. Pull out photograph. Wait 10-20 seconds (You could trim off the ends to have less chemical stains.)**
- 4. Open picture packet. Place negative on paper. Roll in one direction with even pressure.**
- 5. Let sit for 1-2 minutes. You can cover the sandwich with boards and use pressure or warm with hairdryer. The right combination of warmth and moisture is our goal.**
- 4. Peel back the negative slowly and carefully.**